

# ADAM LEARNS GERMAN

**Copyright** : The Contributors (see back)

**Published** : 2009-12-15

**License** : None

**Note** : We offer no warranty if you follow this manual and something goes wrong. So be careful!

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## UNKNOWN 0

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| 1 German for Kiwis            | 4  |
| 2 Basics                      | 5  |
| 3 Intro                       | 6  |
| 4 I, You, They                | 7  |
| 5 I am, I have                | 8  |
| 6 Things You Ask at School    | 9  |
| 7 Who, What, Why              | 10 |
| 8 Doing Things                | 11 |
| 9 Basic Sentence Structure    | 12 |
| 10 Verbs Basics               | 13 |
| 11 Basic Verbs                | 14 |
| 12 Anatomy of a Verb          | 15 |
| 13 Things                     | 16 |
| 14 Names of Things            | 17 |
| 15 Der, Die, Das              | 18 |
| 16 The thing, a thing         | 19 |
| 17 Some Nouns                 | 20 |
| 18 Bits n Pieces              | 22 |
| 19 Time                       | 23 |
| 20 Numbers                    | 24 |
| 21 More Grammar               | 26 |
| 22 Accuse who? Nominate what? | 28 |



# UNKNOWN 0

1. GERMAN FOR KIWIS
2. BASICS
3. INTRO
4. I, YOU, THEY
5. I AM, I HAVE
6. THINGS YOU ASK AT SCHOOL
7. WHO, WHAT, WHY
8. DOING THINGS
9. BASIC SENTENCE STRUCTURE
10. VERBS BASICS
11. BASIC VERBS
12. ANATOMY OF A VERB
13. THINGS
14. NAMES OF THINGS
15. DER, DIE, DAS
16. THE THING, A THING
17. SOME NOUNS
18. BITS N PIECES
19. TIME
20. NUMBERS
21. MORE GRAMMA
22. ACCUSE WHO? NOMINATE WHAT?
23. THATS MY THING!
24. COMMANDS!!!!
25. DATIV
26. PREPOSITIONS
27. BEFORE, NOW, AFTER
28. TENSES
29. EVEN MORE GRAMMA
30. ADJECTIVES



# 3. INTRO

This is a book written while I was learning German to help me learn German.

I have written it so I could test Booki and so I could also be forced to explain in clear terms how German grammar works. To explain it clearly I have to know it clearly :)

## SOME OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

<http://www.deutschseite.de/>

# 4. I, YOU, THEY

The book is intended to help New Zealanders learn German.

ich = I

du = you (informal)

Sie = you (formal)

er, sie, es = he, she, it

All of the above are known as the singular form of **personal pronouns**. Their plural form is:

wir = we

ihr = youse (informal)

Sie = youse (formal)

sie = they

In German there is an emphasis on the use of language in informal and informal contexts which is apparent in the personal pronouns for 'you'.

Sie and sie are only different in written German, they are pronounced the same.

# 5. I AM, I HAVE

**Verbs** tell us what someone does or what happens. The most common verbs are 'to be' and 'to have'. In English these would appear like:

**to be:** I am, he is, you are, they are, we are

**to have:** I have, he has, you have, they have, we have

As you can see the form of the verb used changes depending on the personal pronoun used. This occurs in German too.

The following shows how the same verbs work in German:

## SEIN - TO BE

Singular:

ich **bin** = I am

du **bist** = you are (informal)

er, ser, es **ist** = he, she, it is

Sie **sind** = you are (formal)

Plural:

wir **sind** = we are

ihr **seid** = youse are (informal)

sie **sind** = they are

Sie **sind** = youse are (formal)

Note that the verb form for Sie (Sie sind) is the same for both singular and plural.

## HABEN - TO HAVE

Singular:

ich **habe** = I have

du **hast** = you have (informal)

er, sie, es **hat** = he, she, it has

Sie **haben** = you have (formal)

Plural:

wir **haben** = we have

ihr **habt** = youse have (informal)

sie **haben** = they have

Sie **haben** = you have (formal)

## 6. THINGS YOU ASK AT SCHOOL

Here are some basic things you will ask or state at school. Don't worry about literally translating these for now, just learn them as they are useful :

Ich habe keine Ahnung : I have no idea

Ich verstehe das nicht : I don't understand that

Ich habe eine frage : I have a question

Wie schreibt man das? : How do you write (spell) that?

Kannst du das noch einmal sagen? Can you say that again?

Sprich langsamer : Speak slower

Kannst du das buchstabieren bitte? : Can you spell that please?

If your mind shuts down and you cannot work out what you are being asked by the teacher then you can always say 'bitte?' which means 'please?' and is also a request for more information or help. Blank stares usually do the same job.

# 7. WHO, WHAT, WHY

The following are the all important words to know for asking and answering questions:

wer = who  
was = what  
warum = why  
wo = where  
wann = when  
wie = how  
welche = which

Here are some examples of commonly used questions:

Wo wohnst du? Where do you live?

Was bist du name? What is your name?

Wo kommst du? Where (which country) do you come from?

Wie gehts? How's it going?

# 9. BASIC SENTENCE STRUCTURE

One of most basic sentence structures consists of a subject plus a verb. For example 'I do'. In German it is the same. Below is the German equivalent:

ich mache = I do

To make this sentence negative place 'nicht' after the verb to make 'I do not':

ich mache nicht

You can also make the sentence a question by swapping the positions of the verb and subject to make 'I do?':

mache ich?

## BASIC GENERAL RULES

Basic sentence:

subject + verb

Negative sentence:

subject + verb + 'nicht'

Question:

verb + subject + ?

In German verbs always occur in the second place. The only exception is for a question which does not use a 'question word' (who, why what etc) at the beginning (and for sentences without verbs).

# 10. VERBS BASICS

Verbs tell us what someone does or what happens. You can say a lot with a small number of verbs.

Verbs change form when used and they can either change predictably (**regular verbs**) or unpredictably (**irregular verbs**). To learn how a regular verb changes you must learn the rules. To learn how an irregular verb changes you must learn each one individually.

Regular verbs change their end and this is in relation to the subject (I, you, they etc). The verb will also change depending on tense (present, past, future etc).

Here are the rules for regular verbs used in most situations (the present tense) :

singular:

ich = -e

du = -st (informal you)

er, sie, es = -t

plural:

wir = -en

ihr = -t (informal you)

sie = -en

Sie = -en (formal you)

The change occurs to the end of the verb like so:

machen (to do)

ich mache

du machst

er, sie, es macht

wir machen

ihr macht

sie/Sie machen

Note: sometimes grammar books refer to regular verbs as **weak verbs**, and irregular verbs as **strong verbs**.

# 11. BASIC VERBS

The following is a list of regular verbs you should learn early. Each verb below has an example with a pronoun.

brauchen = to need (ich brauche, I need)  
bringen = to bring (du bringst, you bring)  
denken = to think (er denkt, he thinks)  
fragen = to ask (sie fragt, she asks)  
gehen = to go (es geht, it goes)  
hören = to hear/to listen (Sie hören, you hear)  
kaufen = to buy (wir kaufen, we buy)  
kennen = to know someone (ihr kennt, you know)  
kochen = to cook (Sie kochen, you cook)  
kommen = to come (ich komme, I come)  
lernen = to learn (du lernst, you learn)  
sagen = to say (er sagt, he said)  
spielen = to play (sie spielt, she plays)  
suchen = to look for (es sucht, it looks for)  
trinken = to drink (wir trinken, we drink)  
wohnen = to live somewhere (ihr wohnt, you live)

# 12. ANATOMY OF A VERB

The form of a verb that you find in a German dictionary always has the ending -en. For example to find the verb 'to do' you would look up mach**en**. Sleep is schlaf**en** etc

This is called the **infinitiv** form of the verb.

If you remove the **-en** from the verb you have what is known as the **stem**. For example 'mach' is the stem for the infinitiv form of mach**en**, 'schlaf' is the stem for schlaf**en** etc

# 14. NAMES OF THINGS

The name of something (eg. 'table') and the name of an abstract idea (eg. 'illness' or 'dream') are known as **nouns**. All German courses will require you to learn lists and lists of nouns (mostly for objects in the real world) and they are generally the same basic topics:

Things in your house

Eating and drinking

The World

Health

etc...

It is important to learn the nouns of course otherwise you can't say much about the world around you. Since nouns are what we call things there is usually a 1 to 1 mapping of a noun from English to German. The German word for table, for example, is Tisch.

There are two things to know about German nouns that differ to English:

1. all nouns start with a capital letter
2. nouns have a **gender**

The first rule is easy enough and of course only applies to written German. Don't write 'tisch' write 'Tisch' etc.

The second rule is more difficult for English speakers since English does not often identify nouns by gender although it does occur sometimes. For example when we refer to a ship we often say 'she'. When we refer to a female actor we say 'actress'.

Many other languages use gender for nouns. French always uses a gender - either masculine or feminine. A table in French is 'table' and it has a feminine gender. In German a table ('Tisch') has a gender and it is masculine.

While English sometimes uses gender and French always uses feminine or masculine, German has three genders that are always used - feminine, masculine, and neutral.

There is no way to guess the gender of an object in German, you must simply learn it.

# 15. DER, DIE, DAS

The gender for a noun is very important as it dictates the correct form of the word to be used in a sentence. For example, when referring to a table in English we say 'the table' whereas in German you would say 'der Tisch'. **Der** is the masculine form of 'the'. **Die** (pronounced 'dee') is used with feminine nouns and **das** with neutral nouns.

Der Tisch (the table)  
Die Lampe (the lamp)  
Das Boot (the boat)

In dictionaries the gender of a German noun is always given. In German courses this is usually written by teachers in shorthand like this:

-r Tisch  
-e Lampe  
-s Boot

Der, die, das are known in grammar as **articles**, more specifically they are known as **definite articles**. Der, Die, Das is a headache for many English speakers. The only thing you can do is learn them for each noun.

## IF THERE IS MORE THAN ONE..

It is important to know that the above only applies if the noun is referring to one thing eg. **a** or **the** table.

If you are referring to more than one (eg. the tables) you must remember two rules:

1. the form of der/die/das *always* changes to **die**
2. use the plural form of the noun

The first rule is easy to remember and easy to use. Always use **die** when referring to more than one of the same thing, simple.

The second rule is easy to remember but tricky to use since the plural form of a noun does not follow many rules and must just be learned. This is actually how it is also in English:

book -> books  
child -> children  
leaf -> leaves  
cherry -> cherries

English is not easy to learn either ;)

Some examples of plurals for nouns are:

Lampe -> Lampen  
Tisch -> Tische  
Boot -> Boote

So, to say 'the lamps, the tables, the boats' we would say 'die Lampen, die Tische, die Boote'.

In German courses teachers once again use same shorthand above including the plural form like so:

-r Tisch, -e  
-e Lampe, -n  
-s Boot, -e

A good reference online for information about the correct form of nouns is the German version of Wiktionary:

<http://de.wiktionary.org>

# 16. THE THING, A THING

When using a noun you may wish to refer to it as a generic 'thing' or a specific 'thing'. For example you may talk about 'the table' or 'a table' (any table). In German the first type is stated with *der, die, das* - the **definite articles**, and the second type is identified by **indefinite articles**.

Der Tisch (the table)

Ein Tisch (a table)

Indefinite articles take the form **ein** ('a' in English) with the ending determined by the gender of the noun it is referring to.

Masculine nouns = ein (ein Tisch)

Feminine nouns = eine (eine Lampe)

Neutral nouns = ein (ein Boot)

There is no indefinite article for plurals since that would make no sense - it would be like saying 'a tables' in English.

# 17. SOME NOUNS

Here are some nouns you should know for those inevitable der die das lessons.

## THE HOUSE / DAS HAUS

- r Elektroherd, -e : electric stove
- s Fenster, -s : window
- r Garten, -s : garden
- s Haus, -es : house
- r Herd, -e : stove
- e Lampe, -n : lamp
- e Mauer, -n : wall
- e Steckdose, -n : electric socket
- r Stecker, -s : electric plug
- r Stuhl, -e : chair
- r Tisch, -e, : table
- r Topf, -e : pot
- e Wohnung, -en : apartment
- s Zimmer, -s : room

## THE BODY / DER KÖRPER

- r Arm, -e : arm
- s Auge, -n : eye
- r Bauch, Bäuche : stomach
- s Bein, -e : leg
- s Blut, *no plural* : blood
- r Brust, *no plural* : chest
- r Finger, -s : finger
- e Hand, Hände : hand
- s Herz, -en : heart
- r Kopf, Köpfe : head
- e Nase, -n : nose
- r Magen, Mägen : stomach

## HEALTH / GESUNDHEIT

- e Erkältung, -en : cold
- s Fieber, *no plural* : fever
- e Grippe, *no plural* : flu
- s Halsschmerzen, *no plural* : sore throat
- e Krankheit, -en : disease, sickness, illness
- r Schmerz, -en : pain

# 19. TIME

Time is relatively simple to deal with in German.

# 20. NUMBERS

# 22. ACCUSE WHO? NOMINATE WHAT?

In the structure of a sentence there are several important roles. There is usually a subject, a verb, and an object. The subject is the thing that is doing something, the verb describes what is being done, and the object is having something done to it.

For example :

"The student has a table."

The student is doing something (having), the verb describes what is being done (to have), and the table is having something done to it ('being had').

The sentence can also be described like this:

subject + verb + object

In grammar the subject (plus its article) is known as the **nominativ case**, the verb is the verb, and the object (plus its article) being acted upon is known as the **akkusativ case**.

Its important to know this in German because it effects many ways in which words are used. For example definite and indefinite articles change accordingly to case as follows:

## DEFINITE ARTICLE

masculine : der - den

feminine : die - die

neutral : das - das

## INDEFINITE ARTICLE

masculine : ein - einen

feminine : eine - eine

neutral : ein - ein

Note that it is only the masculine form that changes in each.

# 23. THATS MY THING!

If you wish to refer to something that you or someone possesses in English we use the words 'my', 'mine', 'your', 'our' etc. for example:

- My house is green (Mein Haus ist grün)
- Your dog is loud (Dein Hund ist laut)
- Your cat is loud (Deine Katze ist laut)
- Our child is in the park (Unser Kind ist in den Park)
- Their book is boring (Ihr Buch ist langweilig)
- Her bike rides fast (Ihr Rad fährt schnell)

These are called **possessive pronouns** and they also have a form in German.

Singular  
ich = mein (my)  
du = dein (your, informal, singular)  
er = sein (his)  
es = sein (its)  
sie = ihr (her)  
Sie = Ihr (your, formal, singular)

Plural  
wir = unser (our)  
ihr = euer (your, informal, plural)  
sie = ihre (their)  
Sie = Ihr (your, formal, plural)

Masculine, and neutral use the above form. The form changes for feminine and plural subjects. Use an 'e' at the end for all feminine and plural subjects except **euer** (which becomes **eure**).

It is important to remember that the above is for the **nominativ case**. That means that the possessive pronoun is applying to the subject of the sentence.

**Accusative case** has a different form of the possessive pronoun and it changes more often depending on the gender and whether it is used with a singular or plural subject.

- I wash **your** plate (Ich wasche deinen Teller)
- He threw **their** cat (Er warf ihre Katze)
- Their car is **her** car (Ihr Auto ist ihr Auto)

Its a matter of memorising them. The following is a table of **akkusativ possessive pronouns**:

| personal pronoun | masculine | feminine | neutral | plural | translation     |
|------------------|-----------|----------|---------|--------|-----------------|
| singular         |           |          |         |        |                 |
| ich              | meinen    | meine    | mein    | meine  | my              |
| du               | deinen    | deine    | dein    | deine  | your (informal) |
| er               | seinen    | seine    | sein    | seine  | his             |
| es               | seinen    | seine    | sein    | seine  | its             |
| sie              | ihren     | ihre     | ihr     | ihre   | her             |
| Sie              | Ihren     | Ihre     | Ihr     | Ihre   | your (formal)   |
| Plural           |           |          |         |        |                 |
| wir              | unseren   | unsere   | unser   | unsere | our             |
| ihr              | eueren    | eure     | euer    | eure   | your (informal) |

|     |       |      |     |      |               |
|-----|-------|------|-----|------|---------------|
| sie | ihren | ihre | ihr | ihre | their         |
| Sie | Ihren | Ihre | Ihr | Ihre | your (formal) |

# 24. COMMANDS!!!!

When you command someone to do something or you request something this is known as an **imperative**.  
Examples include :

Get out!  
Lets go out to dinner.  
Run for the hills!

The 2 most common forms of an imperative are the formal using **Sie** and the informal form based on **du**.  
Examples are:

Kommen Sie her! (come here! - formal)  
Komm her! (come here! - informal)

The formal (Sie) version is pretty easy to work out. Just use Sie and the correctly conjugated verb *and* the basic sentence structure **verb + subject + ... + (!)**

The informal version is a little trickier since you do not use the pronoun **du** in the sentence, you merely use the *du form of the verb without the -st* and the sentence structure **verb + ... + (!)**

Steh auf! (stand up!)  
Schrei nicht so laut! (don't yell so loud!)

Although in most cases it may look like it, don't assume the form of the verb used is the same as the stem - irregular verbs may have a different conjugated form for du than is seen in the stem form.

# 25. DATIV

**Dativ** is another case like **nominativ** and **akkusativ**. Dativ is used with indirect objects in a sentence. The following are examples of sentences with indirect objects bolded:

The woman gave **the policeman** a sandwich.  
We go to the market on **our bicycle**.

The definite articles change for dativ objects like this:

der - dem  
die - der  
das - dem

The plural definite article for Dativ is **den**.

Indefinite articles become:

ein - einem  
eine - einer  
ein - einem

There is no plural for indefinite articles.

Dativ is very commonly used when describing the position of an object with an, unter, neben rechts, auf etc.

# 26. PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions are words that usually occur before nouns in the **akkusativ** or **dativ** case and they help determine things like **time** (on, since, before, at, until, for) and **placement** (on, above, under, over).

To determine if it is a **dativ** or **akkusativ** object you must go through 4 steps:

- 1. is the preposition *gegen, durch or für*? If so the object is **akkusativ**.
- 2. is the preposition *anvorbei, mit or zu*? If so the object is **dativ**.
- 3. does the preposition relate to movement? If so the object is **akkusativ**
- 4. does the preposition relate to a static state? If so the object is **dativ**

Remember, the **dativ** and **akkusativ** objects effect the articles. For example, *der, die, das*:

|           | Nominative | Akkusative | Dativ |
|-----------|------------|------------|-------|
| Masculine | der        | den        | dem   |
| Feminine  | die        | die        | der   |
| Neutral   | das        | das        | dem   |
| Plural    | die        | die        | den   |

Here is a list of common **prepositions**.

| preposition | translation                  | akk use                             | dativ use                   |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| an          | at, on, to                   | Der Mann legt das buch an die Tisch | Das buch legt an der Tische |
| auf         | at, to, on, upon             | Der Mann läuft auf der Strasse      |                             |
| aus         | from, out of                 |                                     |                             |
| bei         | at, near                     |                                     |                             |
| bis         | until                        |                                     |                             |
| durch       | through, by                  |                                     | ---                         |
| für         | for                          |                                     | ---                         |
| gegen       | against, into, around, about |                                     | ---                         |
| hinter      | behind                       |                                     |                             |
| in          | in, into                     |                                     |                             |
| mit         | with, by                     | ---                                 |                             |
| nach        | after, to                    |                                     |                             |
| neben       | beside, near, next to        |                                     |                             |
| ohne        | without                      |                                     |                             |
| über        | about, above, across, over   |                                     |                             |
| um          | around, at                   |                                     |                             |
| unter       | under, among                 |                                     |                             |
| von         | by, from                     |                                     |                             |
| vor         | in front of, before          |                                     |                             |
| zu          | at, to                       | ---                                 |                             |
| zwischen    | between                      |                                     |                             |

In addition to this, often the definite article is collapsed into the preposition in the following way:

| preposition | akk use      | dativ use                  |
|-------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| an          | + das = ans  | + dem = am                 |
| auf         | + das = aufs |                            |
| bei         |              | + dem = beim               |
| f r         | + das = f rs |                            |
| in          | + das = ins  | + dem = im                 |
| um          | + das = ums  |                            |
| von         |              | + dem = vom                |
| zu          |              | + dem = zum<br>+ der = zur |

# 28. TENSES

A tense is a grammatical term and it refers to when something occurs. Since verbs describe what occurs the tense illustrates when and how the verb 'takes place'.

The following examples show four different tenses for the verb 'choose':

I choose  
I am choosing  
I have been chosen

Each of the above occurs now (in the present), but they describe different types of occurrence in the present.

To describe this Tenses need to address the basic issue of time - did the event occur in the past, present or future - and what kind of event is it - did it occur right at that moment, is it in the process of happening, or is it always in this state?

To learn basic German you need to know some basic tenses since they effect how verbs are used. Learning the tenses is a matter of knowing how they are categorised and then learning the rules for how verbs work in that category.

The most necessary categories of tenses to learn are **Present Simple** and **Present Perfect**. Its important when learning these that you don't get too hung up on how the categories are named since the titles don't always make sense. For example, the Present Perfect is actually used to talk about the past. Just accept what they are called and learn how they effect verbs.

## PRESENT SIMPLE

The **present simple tense** (sometimes just called the **present simple**) is used a lot in German and is a kind of 'universal' tense. It is probably the tense you are already most familiar with and you probably already know how verbs change (conjugate) correctly in the present simple.

It applies to a vast number of situations including:

1. something that happens now  
eg. 'Fred is cooking dinner'
2. something that happens regularly  
eg. 'Fred cooks every night'
3. a general rule  
eg. 'The sun rises in the east'

The verbs change when used in this tense but they work in the way that you have probably learned already. The stem of the verb remains the same but the ending is changed (for **regular verbs**) depending on the personal pronoun used:

singular:

ich = -e  
du = -st (informal you)  
er, sie, es = -t  
sie = -t (their)

plural:

wir = -en  
ihr = -t (informal you)  
sie = -en (their)  
Sie = -en (formal you)

**Irregular verbs** will change either the stem or a vowel in the stem in du, er, es, sie (her), and sie (their) forms only. How this changes needs to be learned for each irregular verb.

## PRESENT PERFECT

Present Perfect is used to talk about the past using 'to be' (sein) and 'to have' (haben). For example:

Er **hat** in Berlin gewohnt - He lived in Berlin

Wir **sind** ins Kino gegangen - We went to the movies

There are two things to remember:

1. this only applies to sein and haben
2. the verb at the end changes form

Point one is easy! Point two is a little trickier. For regular verbs the second verb has a **ge** added to the beginning (as in the example above), and a **t** added to the end of the stem.

gewohnt

gebracht

gesagt

However, if it is an **irregular verb** the rules vary and need to be learned. For example, even though **machen** is an irregular verb it is conjugated the same way as a regular verb in the Present Perfect (gemacht), however most irregular verbs put **ge** at the beginning and **en** at the end.

gebleiben

gegeben

gelesen

One other thing you have to know is when (with which verbs) to use haben and when to use sein when talking about the past. As it happens in most cases you use haben. You use sein with:

1. bleiben and werden
2. verbs that indicate movement from A to B (eg. gefahren and gegangen)
3. verbs that indicate a change of state (eg. gelernt)

Most verbs lists indicate whether you use haben or sein with the verb and they also usually give you the correct conjugation to use.

# 30. ADJECTIVES

Adjectives give descriptions to nouns.

**Thanks for reading!**

Visit <http://flossmanuals.net> to make corrections or to find more manuals.